

2015 VCE Greek written examination report

General comments

In the 2015 Greek written examination most students displayed a familiarity with the format of the examination and the different types of writing required. They were able to understand both spoken and written texts and convey information accurately and appropriately in Section 1 – Listening and responding and Section 2 – Reading and responding. They were able to respond to all questions and to complete the examination within the prescribed time.

Most students exhibited good comprehension skills and an ability to effectively identify the required information from the listening and reading texts. Students should be reminded that the answer that they provide must be based on the texts. They should not provide information beyond the scope of the question or include prior knowledge of the topic, with the exception of answers in Section 3. In addition, the number of marks indicated for the question and the amount of answer space given for a question should be used as a guide to the length of the expected response.

Students should not restate the question at the start of their answer. Doing this wastes valuable time that could be better used to ensure that they have included all necessary points and that their work has been proofread. Students should practise writing concise responses throughout the year.

The 2015 student responses indicated the need to focus on language learning and to ensure that students have covered all grammatical structures and concepts indicated in the *VCE Greek Study Design* (pp. 14–17). Some areas of concern were:

- inability to distinguish between the Greek and Latin scripts (*βορεί* instead of *μπορεί*; *έπεχε* instead of *έπαιξε*)
- inability to distinguish between certain letters of the Greek alphabet, such as *δ*, *θ*, *φ* and *β*
- failure to demonstrate the existence of the double consonants *ξ* and *ψ*, using *κς* instead
- failure to use accents or using accents incorrectly; accents are important and in some cases they change the meaning of the word (*πότε* and *ποτέ*; *πόσο* and *ποσό*)
- failure to use the word *πολύ* correctly in all its forms (*πολύ καλά*, *πολλή τροφή*, *πολλά παιδιά*, etc.)
- errors with the common verbs *με άρεσε*, *χρειάζομαι*, *προσπαθώ* and *πρέπει*, especially the active and passive; for example, *χρειάζω* instead of *χρειάζομαι*
- lack of agreement between nouns and adjectives in gender, case and number (*θεατρική σχολείο*, *ελληνικής μετανάστης*, *τα ζώα είναι ωφέλιμος*)
- poor use of the genitive case and, in some instances, failure to use the genitive case
- inability to provide a verb in the past tense
- errors with homophones (*ώμος* instead of *ωμός*; *πως* instead of *πώς*; *που* instead of *πού*)
- incorrect spelling of pronouns (*να τιν πω* instead of *να την πω*)
- use of anglicisms or following the English syntax.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding Part A – Answer in English

Overall, students performed well in this part, providing answers that were accurate, concise and based on the texts provided; however, some students needed to be more specific.

Text 1

Question 1a.

He has to study hard to overcome the difficulties he has with the English language.

Question 1b.

All of:

- schools are freer, in that they give students more freedom to think for themselves
- they don't need to learn things off by heart
- teachers do not teach only from books
- students do not need to go to coaching schools/students learn everything at school
- marks are not determined by exams alone.

Question 1c.

Both:

- does not go out often/he studies most of the time
- does not have a job after school.

Text 2

Question 2a.

- houses are built of stone/rock
- narrow paths/paths all lead to the village square
- a plane tree (in the square)
- a coffee shop (in the square)
- a church (near the square)
- spring/drinking fountain
- stone oven
- the general store/supermarket

This question was answered well by most students; however, some students wrote that 'the village is built on a hillside and is surrounded by trees', which did not identify it as traditional. A number of students translated the word *δρομάκια* as *δωμάτια* (rooms), some wrote that the houses were made of 'brick' not 'stone', and a few had difficulties with the word *πλατεία*, translating it as 'plaza', 'plateau', etc.

Part B – Answer in Greek

This part assessed students' comprehension of the spoken text and also their ability to answer questions in complete and accurate sentences in Greek.

Some students wrote the correct answers in the note-taking space but did not include these points when writing their answers. More care should be taken so that this does not occur.

Some students found the questions on Text 3 challenging and did not understand what was required of them; this may have been because they did not read the questions carefully. Students were required to outline Kazan's contribution to America's film industry, but some students had difficulty differentiating between 'film' and 'theatre'. Students should focus on each question and what the question is specifically asking, and students should practise doing this.

Text 3

Question 3a.

Any six of:

- actor
- directed films
- directed works of famous American writers/authors
- established the Actors Studio, where people studied acting
- he gave young actors opportunities to become renowned
- influenced Americans to become directors
- the known/famous movie *America America*.

The fact that Kazan received an Oscar is not itself a contribution to the film industry, but rather a recognition of his contribution. This was not accepted as an answer on its own, although it could have been linked to any of the above points.

Question 3b.

Any four of:

- the fact that the president of the Greek community of New York is on the program to talk about him
- his Greek name
- the film *America America* is based on the life of his family (Greek)/his family is described as a Greek family
- the interviewer refers to him as 'an important Greek-American director'
- the interviewer refers to him as 'a Greek migrant'.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

This part of the examination assessed students' capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of the reading texts. Two shorter texts were set for students and both texts related to humanitarian organisations, the first to a Greek organisation *Το Χαμόγελο του Παιδιού* and the second to *Γιατροί Χωρίς Σύνορα*. Students were required to source their answers from different parts of the texts. While many students were able to do so successfully, some found the task challenging and it appeared that they had not developed the appropriate skills to compare the content of two texts and to respond to questions.

Specific information was required in students' responses. It would have assisted students to underline the key words that they needed to respond to; for example, in Question 4a. the word 'access', in Question 4b. 'developed and widened', in Question 5a. 'type of assistance', etc.

Text 4

Question 4a.

- children in need (and their families)
- regardless of their nationality, religion, socio-economic status/regardless of their background

A number of students did not include the second point, even though it was in the first sentence of the text.

Question 4b.

- it started as a group (of volunteers) who cared for children
- it became an official organisation
- professional staff joined the organisation
- it set up (24-hour) 'Hospitality Houses' throughout Greece
- it engaged the services of groups that organised activities for children
- it made connections with public/government services/police, hospitals, legal authorities
- it provides medical care
- it provides material things such as food and clothing

This question was answered well by most students. A few students repeated the same idea in different words; greater care needs to be taken in this area.

Question 4c.

To put a smile on every child's face.

This question was answered correctly by the majority of students.

Text 5

Question 5a.

- doctors and nurses/medical assistance
- support staff
- food
- clean water

Some student responses stated that 'it provides support to doctors' instead of 'it provides medical/doctors support'. Others wrote 'it provides help/assistance', which is too general and does not specify the 'type of assistance' as asked in the question. Only a few students wrote that 'it provides support staff', even though this was stated in the first sentence of the passage.

Question 5b.

- to raise awareness of the plight of others
- to raise money to fund humanitarian aid
- it personalises the message that every individual can lessen the burden of others/make a difference
- makes the purchaser feel better

Many students simply translated the slogan into their own words, which was not the purpose of the question. Others gave a general response about the organisation instead of writing what the organisation specifically wants to achieve. Students need to practise answering this type of question.

Question 5c.

- One is active in Greece (has centres throughout Greece), the other acts internationally/is a branch of an international organisation.
- One focuses on the wellbeing of individual children (and their families), while the other deals with crises affecting many people/populations.
- One provides ongoing support in Greek society, while the other acts in disaster zones.
- One provides entertainment for children while the other does not.
- One includes the participation of volunteers and professionals, while the other includes only volunteers.

This question asked students to state how the two humanitarian organisations in Texts 4 and 5 were different from one another. Many students found this question challenging. It is crucial that students practise in class questions that compare two things.

Part B – Answer in Greek

In this part of the examination, students were assessed on their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the text (an advertisement for a carer for an elderly Greek lady) and on their capacity to convey the required information accurately and appropriately.

Students needed to produce a coherent and cohesive paragraph in Greek, answering in full and well-linked sentences. Most students understood the purpose of the question and clearly identified five reasons that it would be preferable for the elderly Greek lady to move into a Greek aged-care centre. These students conveyed the information accurately and effectively in Greek. However, some students simply copied information directly from the text.

Students are reminded that point-form responses do not allow them to demonstrate their ability to manipulate language accurately and cannot be awarded full marks. A few students found it difficult to process the language correctly, making errors such as *θα υπάρχει άτομα, πολλές μάγειρες, δεν τρώει κακά φαγητά*.

Text 6

Question 6

Any five of:

- people there would speak Greek
- they would keep her company/she would not feel lonely
- they would help her to take a bath
- she would not have to clean the house
- they would assist her to take her medicine
- they would cook healthy meals/healthy Greek meals for her.

Section 3 – Writing in Greek

In this section, students were asked to show their ability to write an original text of 200–300 words in Greek. They were given five topics to choose from, with five kinds of writing and five text types. The choices included a personal letter, an informative article, a persuasive letter to the editor, an evaluative speech and an imaginative story. Students were assessed according to the following criteria.

- relevance, breadth and depth of content
- appropriateness of structure and sequence
- accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

All five questions in this section of the examination were attempted by students. The personal letter (Question 7) and the imaginative story (Question 11) were the most popular choices. Most students displayed a sound knowledge of the characteristics of the text type and style of writing in which they chose to write. They developed ideas coherently within paragraphs and linked them effectively, but all students need to ensure that they enrich their writing with more complex ideas.

High-scoring responses did not digress from the topic and did not include pre-learned material that was unrelated to the task. However, it was evident – especially in the imaginative stories – that some students included pre-learned material that was more informative and evaluative.

As in previous years, the areas of greatest weakness were accuracy, range, appropriateness and variety of vocabulary and grammar, as well as appropriateness of structure and sequencing of the piece. More care and consistency needs to be taken with tenses; there was a tendency by some students to change from past tense to present and vice versa and this detracted from the logical flow of the writing.

In preparation for the written examination, students should practise writing in a variety of text types and in a variety of styles, including those requiring a formal register, in order to widen their options. Without practice, they may be familiar with a topic but not be able to write well in the required text type.

Question 7

Students were required to write a personal letter to their cousin who lives in Greece, after meeting their cousin's best friend and realising how similar the two were. This question was the second-most popular choice and was completed with varying degrees of success. The majority of students demonstrated a good range of vocabulary and language appropriate to the purpose of the task. Most students observed the convention, content and style appropriate to an informal personal letter. Some students, however, wrote an essay on friendship and what makes a good friend, without relating this effectively to the similarities of the two people specified in the question.

Question 8

In this question students needed to write an article for a health magazine to inform readers of the benefits that pets bring to people of all ages. This question was not a popular choice but it was answered well by those students who attempted it.

Question 9

In this question students were asked to write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper. They were expected to choose a side (whether the driving age should or shouldn't be raised from 18 to 21) and present their point of view with some convincing arguments. Students needed to use elements of persuasive language, such as appeals, emotive language, anecdotes and repetition. This piece of writing should have been clearly recognised as a letter to the editor through characteristics such as content, correct address, title/topic, structure, register and style.

Students responded to this question with varying degrees of success. Lower-scoring responses did not include sufficient arguments to support the chosen point of view.

Question 10

In this question students had to write a speech to be delivered at a school assembly on the issue of people's dependence on technology. They had to mention and elaborate on two ways in which technology brings people closer together and two ways in which it distances them.

Students needed to write appropriately for the audience and also include evaluative language, such as impersonal expressions, use of the third person, and expressions such as 'On the one hand ... and on the other hand'. The piece of writing should have been clearly recognised as the

script of a speech, through characteristics such as title/topic, structure, content, correct address, register and style. Students responded to this question with varying degrees of success.

Question 11

In this question students needed to write an imaginative story responding to one of their parents coming home and, as soon as they entered, saying, 'You will not believe it!' They were expected to continue the story and develop a plot, context or situation based on a strange encounter that one of their parents had. Elements of imaginative writing that needed to be included were development of the plot and characters, descriptions of the setting, heightened drama and a final resolution.

This question was the most popular choice among students. Many students who chose this topic were able to respond in a creative and effective manner; however, some students began an imaginative response and then switched to an essay on a pre-learned topic such as friendship or migration. Other students only referred to the quote in the last paragraph or sentence and made little effort to comment on what was so hard to believe.